

Blood Water and Light

by Richard E. Bieber

The gift of a clear conscience is a call to live a life of forgiveness and freedom, where you are free from guilt and shame and can live a life of transparency and truth.

Scripture: Psalm 130:3, Proverbs 28:13, John 3:1, John 19:31, Ephesians 5:8, Hebrews 10:22, James 5:16, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 1:5

Topics: "Clear Conscience", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the importance of having a clear conscience, using the story of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night as an example of inner unrest despite outward appearances. He emphasizes that a clear conscience doesn't accuse others, defend itself, run away to find peace, or put on a mask to face the day. Bieber highlights the continuous need for forgiveness through the blood of Jesus and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, leading to a life of transparency and walking in the light.

Transcript

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do, unless God is with him." John 3:1-2

The "happy pagan" who hasn't really tasted the Kingdom rarely has a conscience problem. Sometimes he's good natured. Sometimes he's devious. But when he lies down to sleep at night he doesn't need Sominex. It's the man or woman who has, to some extent, been awakened to the reality of God who pays this price for coming into truth: he discovers he has a conscience.

It was more than curiosity that drove Nicodemus to Jesus by night. This wealthy leader of Israel was troubled!

- Had he murdered his secretary and stuffed her in a closet?
- Had he stolen jewels from the temple?

No. And yet Nicodemus just didn't feel right.

We know all about what Nicodemus was going through. Ever since we first saw the light we have often known this inner unrest. And like Nicodemus we pretend it isn't there.

"It can't be my conscience! Wasn't that taken care of when I was reborn? Wasn't that problem fixed the night I confessed my sins with tears before God?"

"Don't tell me it's my conscience, Man. My conscience is clear!"

Is it?

Several things to note about a clear conscience.

1. A clear conscience doesn't have to accuse others.

Whenever we find ourselves getting hard and impatient with each other, critical of everybody else, it's almost always a sign that our own conscience is giving us a hard time. The first thing a troubled conscience will do for relief is look around for somebody to accuse.

2. A clear conscience doesn't have to defend itself.

If the door between you and the Father is open, you never waste time proving it.

- When I'm building up arguments in my own defense,

- when I spend hours daily, justifying myself before the mirror of my own mind, or before my brothers and sisters, it's a sure sign that my conscience is troubled.

3. A clear conscience doesn't have to run away to find peace.

How nice it would be to catch a plane for anywhere, to find some quiet lake way up in Canada and just sit on a rock all day and listen to the birds with nobody to hassle me.

When we start dreaming about getting away from the pressures, nine times out of ten the real pressure is within ourselves. The peace we're looking for will elude us, even if we find the quietest spot on the face of the earth, until our conscience has found rest.

4. A clear conscience doesn't have to put on a mask to face the new day.

The only reason we wear these masks is to conceal what's underneath.

- We don't want people to see what our true face would show.

- We don't want anybody to be able to look into our eyes and see how we really feel.

So, we turn our eyes into sunglasses - we can see out but no one can see in.

No, we didn't murder our grandmother or steal from the boss. And yet there's that strange uneasiness down inside. It's as if we ourselves don't dare look at whatever it is we have locked up in the vault of our hearts. We can hear the muffled voice from within, and even though it gives us bad dreams we have no intention of opening the door.

Now we can protest all we like that our conscience was taken care of when we got reborn. But if we are ...

- habitually accusing others,

- always defending ourselves,
 - endlessly running away from unpleasant situations,
 - and so wedded to our mask that we even wear it to bed,
- we've got a conscience problem.

What we need to understand is that having a clear conscience is not a matter of a once-and-done laundry job. It's rather a daily, hourly, way of life.

The woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair walked out of that house with a clear conscience for the first time in her life. It was as if a million tons had been lifted from her. She was so relieved.

If you meet that woman a year later and find her still living in the freedom of a quiet conscience you know it's not only because she was forgiven, that day, but because she's been dwelling in forgiveness, walking in forgiveness ever since.

A clear conscience is not just a door we pass through. It's a way we walk every hour of every day as long as we live in these present bodies. It's a threefold way of blood, water, and light.

Since it was the day of preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath (for the Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. John 19:31-34

Why does John make such a point of telling us about the blood and water?

Jesus is already dead, but as soon as the spear pierces his side we see two life-giving streams flowing from his dead body. He gave himself up to death in order to release these two streams. And these two streams, continuously flowing, continuously imparting their gifts, are the only source on this troubled earth of a clear conscience.

1. Blood - shed to atone for guilt,

- brings real forgiveness to everyone who draws near to it.
- We live God-pleasing lives not to be worthy of that blood, but because that blood somehow makes us worthy before God.
- We live new lives because that blood tells us that we are truly forgiven.

We are freed from the curse that bound us to doing the same weak thing over and over again, thinking the same sick thoughts round and round, freed from the prison of our own shame and defeat by that blood.

And in every area of our lives where we still know shame and defeat, the word of the living God is; "Come to the blood. Let your guilty conscience be washed in that blood."

Until we get to the place where the foundation of every thought we think and every deed we perform is God's forgiveness, we don't have to add lie on top of lie, excuse on top of excuse, folly on top of folly, to cover our guilt.

If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand.

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

Psalm 130:3-4

And that forgiveness is in the blood which still flows toward the soul that waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.

2. And, out of his side came water - that stream of divine life in the Spirit of God which flows into the heart that is cleansed by the blood.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

And in the stream of living water the Holy Spirit is the power to do God's will.

Now we are driven, not by a guilty conscience, but by the Spirit.

- A guilty conscience fills you with despair, but the Spirit fills you with hope.

- A guilty conscience makes you brood, but the Spirit lifts you into prayer.

- A guilty conscience makes your heart rigid and brittle. The Spirit sets you free.

- A guilty conscience causes the Word of God to sound overwhelmingly impossible. The Spirit transforms the Word of God into the power of God in your life.

And now we live in that stream - not just for fifteen minutes or six months - but on and on forever. And as long as we drink in the life of God's Spirit we do those things which our guilty conscience couldn't get us to do in a million years.

- We worship God.

- Love our neighbor.

- Forgive our enemy.

- Seek the lost.

We remember the forgotten and set the captives free.

It's a way of blood, water, and light.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. I John 1:5-7

This is not some secret formula for the spiritual heavies. This is the call of God to those who are being washed in the blood and filled with the Spirit to live transparent lives.

To walk in the light means exactly what it says.. No more covering up with masks, appearances, words. We are to be what we are, and say what we mean.

"If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not live according to the truth. But if we walk in the light....."

Notice that we are not told to go around pulling off other people's masks. We are to pull off our own mask. If we chase around trying to flush all our brothers and sisters into the light while we keep our lives hidden in darkness, we'll only increase their mistrust of us and of each other.

But if we simply, without making any fuss about it, start walking in the light ourselves, day in and day out, rooting out of our lives those devious ways which have become so much a part of us, we will have peace and our brothers and sisters will be greatly encouraged to be what they are and say what they mean.

The gift above all other gifts that Jesus wants to give us is a clear conscience. He wants us to have it now and to keep it tomorrow and through all the days that remain.

Before us opens a threefold way.

The way of blood, water, and light.

Jesus himself will teach us how to stay on that way if we let him.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/richard-e-bieber/blood-water-and-light/>

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